United Nations DP/CPO/THA/1

Executive Board of the
United Nations Development
Programme and of the
United Nations Population Fund

Distr.: General
31 March 2003

Original: English

Annual session 2003
6 – 20 June 2003, New York
Item 6 of the provisional agenda
Country programmes and related matters

Country programme outline for Thailand (2004-2006)

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03-31447 (E) 150403

I. Situation analysis

1. Despite the daunting challenges of growth with equity, emerging social problems and those of environmental degradation, Thailand has made impressive strides in the past three decades. However, the economic crisis of 1997, and the subsequent severe recession, begged an even greater urgency for an appropriate response to needs. (The common country assessment of Thailand, published in 1999, (http://www.un.or.th/) provides a thorough analysis of the development challenges in the wake of this economic crisis).

2. This response, setting the Thai people firmly on the path of reform and equitable development, has come under the aegis of the 1997 Constitution. Since 2000, therefore, a steady if less rapid economic growth has been restored. In addition, this Constitution has initiated an unprecedented democratization process encompassing newly created independent bodies promoting accountability and transparency in public governance.

3. Despite the economic slowdown, Thailand is still on track to achieve most of its Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Since 1990 poverty has fallen, 27% to 14%, primary school enrolment has risen, 93% to nearly 100%, and infant mortality is only about 2.7%. However, these aggregate level achievements conceal worsening inequities between regions and groups of people, especially between urban and rural areas. These are detailed in Thailand's Human Development Report 2003.

4. Thailand today faces many development challenges. While pollution has decreased in some urban areas, environmental degradation and poor environmental management remain of great concern. Despite a high level of school enrolment, the quality of education and inadequate training and skill development for workers risk undermining future human development, and Thailand's ability to reap the benefits of globalization. Although the spread of HIV/AIDS has slowed, Thailand remains under the threat of an epidemic, besides having to care for the nearly one million people living with HIV/AIDS. Other challenges include rampant narcotic drug use, social exclusion of marginalized groups, teeming slums in periurban areas, disintegration of family and community, prostitution, sexual exploitation, and violence against women.

5. The proposed country partnership provides a framework for cooperation between the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the Royal Government of Thailand and its development partners, to further strengthen the enabling environment of responsive governance and environmental management necessary to meet these challenges.

II. Past cooperation and lessons learned

6. The current country cooperation framework (CCF) for 1997-2001 (extended to 2003) comprised three main areas: (i) poverty reduction, focusing on rural areas, (ii) governance, focusing on emerging issues related to decentralization and community mobilization, (iii) trilateral cooperation, focusing on training of government officials from other countries.

7. An independent review of the CCF (http://www.undp.org/dpa/Country Office/Country Offices.htm) identified a number of lessons learned. Overall, the programme has achieved some noteworthy results and helped Thailand address key challenges related to governance and poverty reduction. However, the achievements could have been greater had there been more thematic integration between the wide range of dispersed initiatives and projects. Furthermore, a drastic reduction in UNDP core resources in 1997 was detrimental to all projects and damaged UNDP's reputation as a reliable partner. Additionally, the trilateral cooperation programme's usefulness could have been greater if it had gone beyond traditional training activities in south-south cooperation. Finally, the impact of the national human development report could have been even greater if its findings had been more closely tied to the overall UNDP programme in Thailand.

8. During this period UNDP morphed from being a traditional provider of technical assistance to the United Nations' global development network and MDG champion. Simultaneously, both Thailand's development context and the Royal Thai Government's view of UNDP's role as a partner for human development altered greatly. These changes and the lessons learned from the current CCF provide an

opportunity for a more focused and coherent country partnership.

III. Proposed thematic areas for the partnership

9. The relationship between Thailand and UNDP has recently developed into a new 'partnership for human development with *both national and international dimensions*'.

10. This partnership is based on a dual exchange of knowledge and expertise. As the United Nations' global development network, UNDP is a crucial gateway for Thailand to access international policy advice, comparative experiences, ideas, as well as new sources of funding. Conversely, Thailand is an indispensable link in UNDP's global development network, as a country with successes and lessons learned of great value to other countries in the south.

11. The Ninth National Economic and Social Development Plan 2002-2006 provides the framework for UNDP's partnership with Thailand. The central objectives of the Plan are people's empowerment, the reduction of poverty, economic stability and sustainability, social sector development and the establishment of good governance at all levels of Thai society.

12. Furthermore, the focus of the new partnership falls within the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) 2002-2006 (http://www.un.or.th). UNDP's programme facilitates the overarching goal of UNDAF -- "to promote disparity reduction and sustainable human development" -- as well as several of the specific UNDAF focus areas.

13. The achievement of the MDGs is the prime objective of the UNDP-Thailand partnership. Although the achievement of most MDGs is on track at an aggregate national level, Thailand is now focusing on regions and groups left behind. Thailand is also exploring the expansion and deepening of the MDG concept (MDG-plus) going beyond the globally set targets and looking at qualitative aspects of their achievements.

14. The country partnership will also contribute to the Government's strategy on competitiveness for the Thai economy in the global economic context, by focusing on knowledge-based development to ensure that Thailand takes full advantage of the opportunities of globalization.

15. The UNDP-Thailand partnership covers four thematic areas: (a) capacity development for Thailand's international partnership for development programme, (b) promoting responsive and democratic governance, (c) environmentally sustainable development, and (d) policy advocacy for the MDGs and the United Nations global development agenda. Promoting gender equality, civil society participation, and focusing on needs and rights of poor and marginalized people are central to all thematic areas. There will also be strong links to existing UNDP inter-country programmes in all four thematic areas.

a) Thailand's international partnership programme

16. A main component of the UNDP-Thailand partnership will focus on developing and utilizing the capacity in Thailand for an expanded 'international partnership for development programme', aimed at promoting south-south collaboration for the achievement of the MDGs in partner countries. This collaboration will support Thailand's contribution to the eighth MDG. It also reinforces a tradition whereby Thailand applies its own resources to support activities of technical cooperation among developing countries (TCDC) in the region.

17. The international partnership programme includes 'spheres of engagement', such as the Greater Mekong Sub-region (including the east-west and north-south economic corridors), the Mekong-Ganga Cooperation (MGC), the Mekong River Commission (MRC), the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC), Bangladesh, India, Myanmar, Sri Lanka and Thailand Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC) and the Colombo Plan. It also focuses on priority countries as beneficiaries of cooperation with Thailand, such as Timor Leste, Afghanistan, and Sri Lanka. On specific issues, such as HIV/AIDS, the international partnership may extend to regions such as Eastern or Southern Africa.

18. The areas of collaboration include: (i) support in designing a strategy for the international partnership programme in harmony with Thai foreign policy and commitments made at United Nations development conferences, drawing on experiences from other donor countries; (ii) developing new partnership modalities such as policy dialogue, technical cooperation, advisory services, in-country training, study tours, and knowledge networking; (iii) developing capacity in Thailand for training people from countries participating in the international partnership, within UNDP's practice areas; (iv) promoting Thai nationals serving abroad as development workers and experts, including support to Thai volunteers and Junior Professional Officers.

b) Responsive governance

19. The 1997 Constitution, called the "people's Constitution", provides the foundation for a truly participatory, rights-based, and accountable form of democratic governance in Thailand. Thailand is also effecting major reforms in the public sector that will require consolidation and follow-up by the Government throughout the period of the UNDP country partnership and beyond.

20. In most countries where UNDP is active, it is involved in promoting responsive governance and can, therefore, offer strategic support to the democratization process in Thailand, in accordance with UNDAF objectives. UNDP can thus provide access to international experience, expertise and knowledge networks, and help Thailand connect with international institutions working in the area of governance. UNDP can also ensure that other countries in the south benefit from the experience and expertise in Thailand, thus promoting best practice in the area of responsive governance.

21. The UNDP-Thailand partnership on responsive governance will be targeted at both ends of the democracy spectrum: the decentralized grassroots level and the central national level.

22. At the *local level*, UNDP will support on-going efforts to promote participatory development planning and decision-making, for example at the *Tambon* (sub-district) level, building capacity for effective implementation of poverty reduction and development programmes, stronger voice of people in local governance, facilitating partnerships for community development between local authorities and local non-governmental organizations and community groups, empowering women in local governance, and promoting accountability, transparency, and the right to information.

23. At the *national level*, UNDP will provide strategic support to Thai institutions, governmental and non-governmental, working in areas such as democratic governance, civic education, e-governance, people's participation, rule of law, transparency, accountability, right to information, women's political empowerment, ombudsman, and human rights. UNDP will facilitate policy dialogue and sharing and building of knowledge within Thailand, as well as with other countries similarly engaged.

24. These efforts will further strengthen the enabling environment and capacity for reaching the MDGs and reducing poverty and inequality among all regions and groups in Thailand.

c) Environmentally sustainable development

25. This country partnership will provide the framework for collaboration with concerned government agencies and civil society groups on sustainable environment management in Thailand, in accordance with UNDAF objectives. It will help in addressing environmental issues inextricably linked to sustainable development, poverty and gender inequality, as well as in implementing the decisions of environment-related international agreements.

26. Areas of partnership would include: (i) integrated ecosystem and urban environment management, focusing on capacity and partnership building via inter-sectoral and multi-stakeholder participatory approaches, to address issues of natural resources, environmental management and health for the poor; (ii) energy conservation and renewable energy, with particular regard to a healthy environment for the benefit of the poor; and (iii) sustainable community-based environment management, working with civil society organizations mainly through small and medium size grants to promote environmental awareness and transfer of appropriate knowledge and good practices.

27. A large part of UNDP Thailand's existing portfolio is financed by non-core funding and further funding from the Global Environment Facility (GEF). UNDP Thailand will continue to explore and mobilize support from global facilities such as the Clean Development Mechanism, the Persistent Organic Pollutants initiative, Capacity 2015, and Public-Private Partnerships for the Urban Environment. However, allocation of core funding to this area is necessary, as 'venture capital' to leverage funding from other sources.

d) Policy advocacy for Millennium Development Goals and the United Nations global development agenda

28. As a fourth and final thematic area, UNDP will help build a country-level coalition to stimulate action on the MDGs. UNDP will promote the United Nations global development agenda in Thailand, in the context of the commitments made by Thailand in recent United Nations development conferences. This will be done through United Nations country team collaboration and joint activities, and a strong resident coordinator system.

29. The national human development reports have helped in implementing the United Nations global development agenda from a human development angle, and have provided input into policy dialogue between Government and civil society on key issues of concern to Thailand.

30. The following strategy is proposed: (i) continued publication of biennial national human development reports via stakeholder consultation, engagement with the media and follow-up policy dialogues on key issues raised in the reports; (ii) support for the Thai Millennium Development Goal Report and the development and monitoring of the Thai MDG-plus concept; (iii) policy dialogue on key MDG-related issues, including HIV/AIDS, gender and income inequality, knowledge-based development, and information and communications technology (ICT) for development; (iv) support to MDG advocacy, the Global Compact, HIV/AIDS advocacy, and other joint or collaborative United Nations programmes or initiatives.

IV. Partnership management, monitoring and evaluation

31. The country programme will explore ways in which the Thai-UNDP partnership can best be achieved at a practical level, including an increasing number of initiatives to be managed by means of "partnership agreements" with national institutions, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) or the private sector, as appropriate.

32. Such agreements, which may take the form of sub-contract and/or grant modalities, will focus on mutual expectations and the achievement of specific results in exchange for UNDP funding. Apart from reinforcing results-based management, this approach is more consistent with the emphasis on partnerships and the evolving nature of UNDP-supported activities in Thailand. It should also reduce the transaction costs for all parties.

33. The country partnership will thus be monitored and evaluated on the basis of results-based and output-oriented partnership agreements, and in accordance with UNDP's rules and procedures. This will be effected at the thematic level, as well as at the country programme outline (CPO) level as a whole.

34. The UNDP country office will be able to work with different institutions in and beyond the Royal Thai Government, to formulate and oversee such partnership agreements. Further changes will be undertaken to ensure that the structure and capacity of the office's Development Division matches the focus of this new country partnership. The Sub-regional Resource Facility (SURF), located in the Thailand office, will be a resource for the formulation and management of the new programmes, and for continued knowledge development in the office.

35. Non-core resources will be mobilized and UNDP Thailand will continue to explore and mobilize support from other global facilities. It is anticipated that the UNDP Thematic Trust Funds will be tapped in most areas of the country partnership, as will the possibilities for local public-private partnerships.

Annex
Results and resources framework for Thailand (2004-2006)

Strategic areas of support	*Intended outcomes*	*Indicators of outcome or purpose*	*Outputs, including key output indicators, where needed*	*Resources (in United States dollars)*
CPO Thematic Area: a) International Partnership Programme (UNDAF Focus Area 4: International Competitiveness)				
SAS 1: Regional and sub-regional cooperation, including economic cooperation among developing countries (ECDC) /TCDC	Increased economic and political cooperation between Thailand and other countries New partnerships for human development initiated with other countries Thai development knowledge and experience disseminated to other countries	Illustrative: State budget allocated towards the Thai International Partnership Programme, number of persons trained by Thai institutions, number of technical cooperation missions fielded by Thai experts, number of Thai nationals serving as volunteers abroad	Strategy for a new International Partnership for Development and the Capacity of Government, NGOs and academic institutions to implement it Programmes in third countries drawing on Thai support and expertise New partnership modalities with other countries in south	Regular: 1,163,440 Cost-sharing: 800,000 Total: 1,963,440
CPO Thematic Area: b) Responsive Governance (UNDAF Focus Area 3: Governance)				
SAS 2.1: Social cohesion through development planning: decision-making at the sub-national level SAS 2.2: Decentralization of policies and allocation of resources to the sub-national levels SAS 2.3: Partnerships between local authorities and civil society organizations SAS 2.4: Electoral legislation and institutional capacity of electoral commissions: systems, and processes	Capacity at local levels for participatory planning and effective implementation of poverty reduction programmes Partnerships between local authorities, NGOs, community-based organizations (CBOs) Increased accountability, transparency, access to information, and empowerment of people in local and national governance Increased citizen participation, knowledge and awareness in democratic processes	Illustrative: Coverage of national civic education efforts, capacity of key institutions of democratic governance, number of women candidates in local and national elections, existence of institutionalized mechanisms for regular consultation between local governments and civil society organizations (CSOs) on economic and social policies and programmes, positions and policies advocated by civil society and community-based organizations (CSOs, CBOs) incorporated in development plans	Capacity of local level authorities for participatory development and poverty reduction strengthened Capacity of key institutions of democratic governance further strengthened Effective approaches explored for further strengthening responsive governance at national and local levels	Regular: 968,720 Cost-sharing: 150,000 Total: 1,118,720

Strategic areas of support	*Intended outcomes*	*Indicators of outcome or purpose*	*Outputs, including key output indicators, where needed*	*Resources (in United States dollars)*
CPO Thematic Area: c) Environmentally sustainable development (UNDAF Focus Area 6: Environmental Management)				
SAS 3.1: Institutional framework for sustainable environmental management/ energy development SAS 3.2: Regional cooperation/coordination in natural resource management and sustainable energy development SAS 3.3: National capacity for participation in global conventions, regulatory regimes and funding mechanisms for environmentally sustainable development	Improved capacity of national and local authorities, NGOs, CBOs, and private sector in environmental management and sustainable energy development focusing on the poor and disadvantaged Strengthen regional approaches to environmental management and sustainable energy development Global and regional environmental concerns and commitments integrated in national development planning and policy	Illustrative: Number of training courses/ consultative workshops on sustainable environmental and energy conservation/ management; coverage of integrated ecosystem management efforts and multi-stakeholder governance structures; knowledge networks of regional, national and local partners on environment, energy and poverty; number of Small Grants Programme (SGP) projects received, approved and funded; improved guidelines for GEF funding; number of project briefs for GEF funding; volume of resources mobilized and proportion of co-financing for new projects	National consultative fora on strategy for institutional strengthening and capacity building within thematic area A sub-regional knowledge network on Mekong wetlands biodiversity- related conventions SGP projects implemented and a national/local knowledge network(s) established Local governments, private sector, and communities trained in urban environmental governance, integrated ecosystem management Improved capacity to negotiate and implement global and regional environmental commitments	Regular: 459,360 GEF, cost-sharing, other: 9,000,000 Total: 9,459,360
CPO Thematic Area: d) Policy advocacy for MDGs and the United Nations global development agenda (UNDAF Focus Area 5: Human Security)				
SAS 4.1: Leadership of resident coordinator system (RCS) vis-à-vis the Millennium Declaration SAS 4.2: Public awareness and policy on sustainable human development SAS 4.3: Collaboration on programming and administration by the RCS	Increased policy dialogue and public debate on the achievement of Millennium Development Goals (MDG+) Increased use by decision-makers of MDG+ framework in policy formulation and implementation Impact of the national human development report on public debate and policy making	Illustrative: Media attention to MDG+, the national human development report and key issues; the number of senior government statements on MDG+; and the resources allocated toward joint United Nations initiatives	Thai Millennium Development Goal report National Human Development Report, and policy analysis on key issues Joint United Nations programmes initiated or strengthened	Regular: 404,480 Cost-sharing: 400,000 Total: 804,480
			TOTALS	Regular resources: 2,996,000 Other resources: 10,350,000 Grand total: 13,346,000